

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An arrangement for loading rate table data comprising:

an external scale having a postage calculator requiring rate table data to calculate a monetary postage value for a postal item weighed by said scale;

a postage meter that prints said monetary postage value on said postal item, said postage meter having a processor therein;

a serially-operating modem which receives said rate table data from an external source other than said postage meter; and

a switchover module connected between said postage meter, said scale and said modem and having a control line for setting a switching state of said switchover module to produce a serial connection between said external source and said postage calculator in said scale to serially conduct data downloading of said rate table data ~~directly~~ from said external source to said postage calculator in said scale ~~exclusively~~ via said modem and said switchover module with no internal processing or storage of said rate table data by said processor of said postage meter.

2. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 comprising a postage meter machine containing said postage meter, and wherein said switchover module is contained within said postage meter machine.

3. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 2 wherein said postage meter machine comprises an input/output control module containing

a modem interface and a scale interface, and wherein said postage calculator comprises a postage calculator interface, said switchover module being connected between said modem interface, said scale interface and said postage calculator interface and said scale comprising means for supplying a signal on said control line to switch said switchover module to a switching state wherein said postage calculator, via said postage calculator interface, directly receives said rate table data.

4. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 3 wherein said switchover module comprises a first contact group connected to said modem, and connected to said modem interface via a first set of four lines, a second contact group connected to said postage calculator interface and to said scale interface via a second set of four lines, and a driver connected to said control line for operating said first and second contact groups to set said switching state of said switchover module dependent on a signal on said control line.

5. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 4 wherein said postage calculator interface comprises an RS-232 interface, and wherein each of said first and second sets of four lines comprises a TXD transmission line, an RXD reception line, a DTR reception readiness line, and a DSR transmission readiness line.

6. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 4 wherein said control line is also connected to said postage calculator interface, which supplies said signal on said control line to set said switching state of said switchover module.

7. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 6 wherein said scale comprises a keyboard having an actuatable selection key, said keyboard being at least indirectly connected to said postage calculator interface and actuation of said selection key causing said signal to be generated on said control line for setting said switching state of said switching module to cause said rate table data to be directly supplied to said postage calculator.

8. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 7 wherein said postage calculator operates with existing rate table data and wherein said rate table data from said external source comprise updated rate table data, and wherein said postage calculator includes a first memory area wherein said existing rate table data are stored and a second memory area wherein said updated rate table data are stored after actuation of said selection key, said updated rate table data including conversion data identifying an effective date of the updated rate table data, and said postage calculator having a third memory area in which said conversion data are stored, and said postage calculator automatically replacing said existing rate table data with said updated rate table data at a time of first use of said postage calculator following said effective date.

9. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 8 wherein said updated rate table data further include data representing additional information, and wherein said postage calculator has a fourth memory area for storing said data representing additional information.

10. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 8 wherein said scale comprises a clock/date module connected to said postage calculator, and wherein said postage calculator is programmed to automatically compare a date supplied by said clock/date module with said conversion data and to replace said existing rate table data with said updated rate table data when said conversion data equal or follow said date supplied by said clock/date module.

11. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 1 comprising a postage meter machine containing said postage meter, and wherein said modem switchover module is disposed externally of said postage meter machine.

12. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein said scale with said postage calculating module is external from said postage meter machine.

13. (Original) An arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein said switchover module and said external modem are combined to form a docking station.

14. (Previously Presented) An arrangement as claimed in claim 11 wherein said switchover module in said postage calculator are combined in a common housing and are both disposed externally from said postage meter machine.